



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

November 10, 2005

TWO ANTIGUANS CONVICTED OF HUMAN SMUGGLING

St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands—Two citizens of Antigua and Barbuda accused of smuggling 37 illegal immigrants from Haiti and Dominican Republic were found guilty by a jury in federal court here yesterday.

Following an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Barton Michael, 39, and John Bailey, 53, were arrested and indicted in May 2005 for alien smuggling. The indictment charged the two Antiguan citizens with conspiracy and attempt to bring illegal aliens into the United States for a financial gain in violation of Title 8, United States Code (USC) 1324.

The criminal human smuggling trial of Michael and Bailey commenced on Nov. 7, 2005 at the U.S. District Court for the District of the United States Virgin Islands (USVI).

During the trial, the government presented a total of eight witnesses including five material witnesses who were part of the smuggling venture and on board the M/V Requin used by Barton and Bailey to smuggle the 37 illegal immigrants from Dominica to St. Croix, USVI.

Barton and Bailey were identified by material witnesses as the drivers of the vessel used to transport the illegal immigrants to the United States' territory.

"Smugglers have no regard for human life and will put people at risk just to make a profit," said Leo I. Morales, acting special agent-in-charge of ICE in Puerto Rico. "Smugglers are putting people at risk by exposing them to dangerous conditions and ICE cannot and will not tolerate this criminal activity. We encourage people who want to come to the United States to use legal means to do so and not to risk their lives by dealing with unscrupulous smugglers."

Disrupting and dismantling human smuggling and trafficking rings has been a top priority for ICE since the agency was established in March 2003, given the potential threat that these organizations pose both to national security and public safety. With ICE's broad authorities for enforcing immigration and customs laws and its expertise in financial investigations, the agency is able to pursue human smuggling organizations more aggressively than ever before. As a result, ICE agents arrested more than 1,630 human smugglers nationwide in fiscal year 2004.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.